

Waste depot won't be here, mayor vows

JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Reporter

A search for a spot to build a household hazardous waste depot will not include Stouffville if Mayor Wayne Emmerson gets his way.

Last week, York Regional council directed staff to focus on Aurora or Newmarket when finding a place for the depot to hold paint, oil and other chemicals.

At the present time, household waste material is taken to mobile units which show up in towns for a weekend once a year.

A few months ago, the region announced that an existing site at Woodbine and St. John's Sideroad would house one of three such facilities planned for York.

The Woodbine Avenue site was to accommodate waste from Newmarket as well as from Stouffville. Last year, 2,945 vehicles dropped

off waste at a Newmarket mobile unit, compared to 927 vehicle drops off in Stouffville.

Asking Stouffville to take Newmarket's waste did not, however, impress local residents.

Whitchurch-Stouffville council received a 350-name petition asking that the depot not be built at the Woodbine property.

Mayor Wayne Emmerson supported the residents.

The mayor told *The Tribune* that he will notify the local ratepayers' group to tell the members that it is very unlikely that they will be asked to share their neighborhood with a hazardous waste facility.

In the slim chance that such a facility is proposed for Stouffville in the future, it will be the subject of a full public hearing, stressed Emmerson.

"We'll air this in front of the public absolutely," said Emmerson.



NEW HOME FOR RACHEL: The Cundaris of Vandorf adopted 11-month-old Rachel from China recently. Cuddling her as the toddler plays with Murphy the dog's ears are sisters Lisanne, Amy, mom Linda, brother Robert and dad Chuck.

Photo by STEVE SOMERVILLE

Garbage crisis reaching critical mass: Landon

KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
Staff Reporter

It's really a race against time. And so far, we're losing.

The garbage crisis has reached a critical point in York Region, said Gord Landon, chair of the region's Solid Waste Management Task Force.

"We don't want to scare people, but we have to make sure they are conscious of the problem," Landon

said. "I don't think people realize how really critical the situation is."

The Keele Valley landfill is scheduled to close in 2001. That means Metro Toronto and York Region will have no where to put the mountains of waste their communities generate. The task force has been seriously considering solutions for more than six months; it even hired a consultant to look at the massive problem that is now only three years away.

By then, York Region will require disposal for almost 180,000 tonnes of waste a year and it's estimated the cost could be as high as \$70 a tonne. That means a potential increase in disposal costs of \$7.6 million a year.

Several options have been considered and rejected, Landon said. "We didn't feel we could find another adequate landfill site close enough - and besides we all remember the fight against the

dump," he said. "Incineration is a feasible idea but the time line in getting environmental approvals and the capital costs means we couldn't do it by the year 2000 and York Region certainly couldn't do it on its own."

Landon, who has travelled extensively looking at ways other North American and European cities have handled what is really a global crisis, said with advancing technology incineration can actually be quite safe. But unless cities have a buyer for the steam energy incinerators produce, it's not financially viable.

Rail hauling garbage to the U.S. can be used as a short-term solution, a stop-gap, but Landon said he can't see the States wanting to take Canada's garbage forever. Because we would be subject to the Americans' whim we need a back-up solution at the ready.

For the first 12 to 24 months after Keele closes, garbage will be hauled by truck to the U.S. But the permanent solution remains elusive.

Rail hauling to Kirkland Lake's Adams Mine looks like it will be the likely choice, based on the task force recommendation.

But the biggest factor in the garbage issue is still diversion. The Region has set a goal of 50 per cent diversion by the year 2000, a goal that will be difficult, if not impossible, to meet, Landon said.

"The average diversion rate now

is about 25 per cent," Landon said.

It seems composting may be the answer. It will mean a massive public education program, changes in the way garbage is collected and sorted and could even change our recycling programs.

"It may mean the elimination of blue boxes," Landon said, explaining the system could entail wet bag/dry bag collection with paper and recyclables sorted at the composting facility.

"The way we presently collect, with segregated boxes in the truck itself, is very expensive. It's \$75 an hour for the truck and driver to be on the road doing that sorting."

A standardized list of recyclables to improve consistency is also recommended as is public education.

Regional staff and the consultant are still researching the merits of composting, but the recommendation will go before regional council next week.

And any solution will have to be agreed upon and shared between York and Metro.

"Any facility we decide to go ahead on will have to start today," Landon said. "With environmental approvals we can't afford to wait even until next year - we just don't have the time and people have to appreciate that."

And Landon added, regardless of which solution becomes the plan for the future, we are all going to be paying a lot more for garbage collection that we do today.



LIGHTS, CAMERA: Crew and cast of a Fisher Price commercial shoot mill around Somerville Street in Stouffville on Monday preparing for a shot.

Photo by SJOERD WITTEVEEN

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